GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1818
ANSWERED ON:08.03.2016
Shrinking Green Areas
Patel Shri Dilip

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the ambit of green area has been shrinking due to increase in urabanization and construction of residential and commercial buildings and if so, the details thereof;
(b) whether the Government has any current policy in this regard, if so, the details thereof; and
(c) the progress made so far to save trees and green area from rapid decline due to increase of urbanization and construction work ?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a) Forest Survey of India, Dehradun is carrying out the assessment of forest cover of the country biennially and the findings are published in India State of Forest Report. The latest report in the series is India State of Forest Report 2015. As per this report, the total forest cover of the country is 7,01,673 square kilometers which is 21.34% of the total geographical area of the country. There is a net increase of 3775 square kilometers in the forest cover of the country as compared with India State of Forest Report-2013. The details showing forest cover and change in forest cover in States/UTs wise is given in Annexure.

(b) & (c) The National Forest Policy, 1988 (NFP) aims to have a minimum of one third of the total land area of the country under forest or tree cover. The management and protection of forest area is primarily the responsibility of concerned State/UT Governments. Action against forest offences is taken under various acts such as the Indian Forest Act, 1927, Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and respective State Acts/Rules.

As per the Land use Classification in Urban and Regional Development Plans Formulation and Implementations (URDPFI) Guidelines, 2014, forests are normally covered under "Recreational" use. For prescribing norms, forests are classified under "Open Spaces" whereas Parks/Playgrounds are classified as "Organized Green". In order to conserve and protect the forests in and around the cities and towns, the State Governments need to adhere to the Norms prescribed in the URDPFI Guidelines, 2014.

Further, afforestation Programme is taken up under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes such as National Afforestation Programme (NAP), Green India Mission (GIM), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) which from 2015-16 has been amalgamated as the Watershed Development Component of the "Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY)". National Bamboo Mission (NBM) and under Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), different State Plan/ Non- Plan Schemes including Externally Aided Projects.

The Ministry also provides Grants-in-aid to State Governments to supplement the efforts of the States for forest management and protection. Funds are being provided under Intensification Forest Management Scheme (IFMS). These funds are utilized for patrolling of the forests, establishment of camps, building fire watch towers, creation and maintenance of fire lines, forest fire control, survey and demarcation of forest areas and strengthening forest infrastructure.

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